

dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the

Ministry of Community and Social Services



In the Brantford Local Office, income maintenance supervisor **Jeff Hamilton** and systems officer **Jean Klimchuk** are enthusiastic about Caseworker Technology and how it has transformed the way the income maintenance staff do their work. Brantford was the ministry's pilot site for Caseworker Technology, which is to be rolled out soon to other income maintenance offices; read more about it on page 3.

Bill 7 changes labour law

The proclamation of Bill 7, which took place in the legislature on Nov. 10, results in labour law changes that affect the Ontario Public Service.

Changes have been made to the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act (CECBA), because of the repeal of Bill 40 (these were amendments to the Labour Relations Act in 1993) and because the government needed more flexibility to meet its commitment to reduce the size and cost of the Ontario Public Service and make it more efficient.

Among the major changes to

CECBA as a result of Bill 7:

- The Crown is exempt from successor rights, meaning that when public sector work is transferred to the private sector, employers won't be legally obligated to follow OPS terms and conditions of employment.
- The right to strike remains for OPSers who aren't essential service providers, but replacement workers are no longer banned. Existing essential service agreements remain in force until a collective agreement is reached.

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Holiday greetings to all

As 1995 draws to a close and a new year begins, we would like to express a heart-felt "thank you" to all ministry staff and our wishes for a happy holiday season.

We hope that in the coming holiday period you will have the time for those activities that refresh and rejuvenate your spirits, and those of your families and loved ones.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment. We wish you and your families a safe and happy holiday season.

David Tsubouchi
Minister

Sandra Lang
Deputy Minister

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A taste of the work world



Doug Sutherland photo

At Child and Parent Resource Institute in London, Take Our Kids to Work Day on Nov. 8 took the form of a career day, to show Grade Nine students the various programs and occupations at CPI. About 30 students turned out, eager to learn about what's involved in providing services to children with developmental challenges, emotional disturbances and behavioural problems.

The day involved tours to Pratten One, a hospital-type program, as well as to the clinical laboratories. Presentations were made to the students by professionals such as a nurse, occupational therapist,

physiotherapist, psychologist, social worker, an audiologist, a developmental services worker, special education teacher and a biochemical geneticist.

Shown in the photo is **Deb Lawrence** (left), acting supervisor of Pratten One, with client Karl in the wheelchair, along with **Suetcha Narkarni**, a Child Life volunteer. With the students they discussed "differences" to focus on Karl's stomach feeding tube. For most of the students, this was their first visit to a clinical setting.

For another photo from Take Our Kids to Work Day, please see page 2.

New redeployment forum

The ministry now has a forum for discussing and resolving job security issues for professional, management and excluded employees who have been declared surplus.

The Professional, Management and Excluded Redeployment Committee (PMERC) met for the first time Oct. 18 and meets monthly to share and communicate training and redeployment issues for non-OPSEU

staff of MCSS. In our ministry, this means members of the Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario (AMAPECO).

The co-chairs of PMERC are **Janis Fraser** from Human Resources Branch (416-327-4829) for management, and **Lloyd Hawker** of Research and

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Task force studying young offender programs

Our minister's Parliamentary Assistant, **Janet Ecker**, is co-chairing the task force that will develop a strict-discipline program for Ontario young offenders.

The task force will review Canadian and international models of strict-discipline facilities and by Apr. 15 will make recommendations on a program for the custody, management and treatment of Ontario's young offenders.

Janet's co-chair is **Gary Carr**, Parliamentary Assistant to the Solicitor

General. Solicitor General and Minister of Corrections Services **Bob Runciman** said the program should expose young offenders to the concepts of discipline and personal responsibility.

Similar programs typically introduce fundamental values such as personal accountability and self-respect in a highly-structured atmosphere of rigorous physical discipline. Manitoba and Alberta have recently introduced such programs.

When good-bye is forever.... Understanding and coping with grief

Stories and photos by Jack Stiff, Communications and Marketing Branch

The death of a loved one, or a person who is close, can have profound effects on the survivors, as well as those who are part of their lives. Understanding the grief can be a vital first step in coping, or in helping the survivor cope with loss. Kingston's Ongwanada Resource Centre held its annual conference in November for professionals and volunteers who work with people with developmental disabilities. The 1995 conference theme was grief, with a focus on grief as it affects individuals with developmental disabilities and their caregivers.

Speaker **Mario Ruffolo**, a registered nurse who is community residence supervisor at Ongwanada, said that there's a perception among caregivers and family members that people with developmental disabilities are child-like, and need protection from the reality of death. This protection, he added, could mean being kept from attending a funeral, and in some cases, delaying news of a death for weeks. "That perception is incorrect," Mario said. "When a death occurs, tell the person right away. Use language the person can understand, and avoid euphemisms like 'passed on' or 'gone away'."

He also emphasized that family or other caregivers must be truthful, possibly to the point of being blunt. Explain the implications of death, including its finality. If a death is anticipated or is imminent, prepare the person beforehand if possible. Develop a plan of action that will minimize change at the time of loss.

Individuals with more severe disabilities may have difficulty grasping the concept of death, but they may



Mario Ruffolo

grieve for someone who's no longer there that they miss. Even if the finality of death itself isn't comprehended, the sense of loss can be very real. The caregiver should provide these individuals with the information they need in a timely manner to help them comprehend the concept of death.

Those with severe developmental disabilities who may not show much awareness of their surroundings or of their peers may still sense the emotions of their caregivers and experience grief indirectly. "They may not be grieving for the person who has died," Mario said, "but if the person who cares for that individual each day is sad or crying, and seems quite different, then the person with severe developmental disabilities is going to experience grief in that way."

In the photo, Huronia Regional Centre librarian **William Land** gives an overview of HRC operations in a slide presentation to participants in Take Our Kids to Work Day. The Orillia facility hosted 18 Grade Nine students from local secondary schools who accompanied a parent to work at HRC on Nov. 8.

Students were welcomed into various work areas of the HRC operation: client residences, administrative offices and program and food services. The students also toured a residential area (TV8) and saw presentations by the Audiology and Pharmacy departments. They also received a tour of the HRC Archives.

The Take Our Kids to Work Day program became province-wide in 1995. The purpose of the program is

Teens tour Huronia

to give the students an opportunity to view the work that their parents and other adults do, resulting in an understanding and appreciation for

Grief and the caregiver

The death of a person with a developmental disability can feel like the loss of a family member to a long-term caregiver.

Dr. R. W. Boston, director of the Palliative Care Unit of Kingston General Hospital, said that a bereaved caregiver must "re-group" and be prepared to invest in the care of others.

"Caring for a person whose needs are large, complex and unpredictably changing is exhausting and can be very discouraging," said Dr. Boston. "It's important to stay committed, stay involved, and remain hopeful, cheerful — and effective."

"The caregiver has to believe in the work, and have a genuine interest.

Humour is also important. Even in the darkest situation there is humour, and sadness and humour often go hand in hand. In the midst of sadness and loss, it's all right to see the humour and acknowledge it. Genuine humour is an important element in sustaining a caregiver through the illness of death."

Dr. Boston advised that the intensity of involvement required to care for people with severe developmental disabilities cannot be maintained by individuals on their own. No single person, no single professional can meet the needs of such patients. Teamwork is necessary. Individual team members need to see and appreciate the value of colleagues, professional and volunteer.

When families of individuals with developmental disabilities whose death is impending are involved, a major responsibility of a caregiver is to help families toward acceptance and patient waiting. Acceptance of death, acceptance of the fact that we cannot influence the timing of death, is important to the caregiver.

Dialogue concludes its coverage of the Ongwanada conference in the next issue with a story on coping strategies for the bereaved.

...Bill 7 changes labour law

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- The Public Service Act was changed so that senior management group and management/excluded staff can be released with reasonable notice or compensation in lieu of notice.
- Classification disputes can still be grieved but if unresolved, must be settled at the bargaining table and not by arbitration.
- The government no longer has to release confidential labour relations information under freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation.

An e-mail with details was sent out throughout the ministry by Deputy Minister **Sandra Lang** on Nov. 14; the Oct. 4 issue of **INSTANT topical** and the Oct. 13 and Nov. 17 issues of **topical** also carried details. Faxed photocopies are available by calling **topical** at 416-325-1375.



Wendy Grace photo

Better service, less paperwork with Caseworker Technology

In Brantford, they have seen the future. In fact, they see it every time they look at their computer screens.

"They" are the income maintenance staff at the Brantford Local Office. "It" is Caseworker Technology — an automated computer system that results in less paperwork for income maintenance staff and more time for case management. Brantford is the ministry pilot site for Caseworker, where it was set up in March; it has also been tested in two general welfare offices in Metro Toronto.

When fully implemented, Caseworker Technology will take all our Family Benefits staff as well as the municipal staff of General Welfare Assistance offices — some 7,000 workers in total across the province — into the 21st century.

This is the Automating Social Assistance Project (also known as ASAP or ASAproject), a four-year plan being implemented in stages to bring a tailored-for-caseworkers computer application to more than 170 provincial and municipal delivery sites.

Why do we need Caseworker? Because the mainframe systems being used now, **CIMS** (Comprehensive Income Maintenance Systems) and **MAIN** (Municipal Assistance Information

Network) are out-dated manual systems that are very labour-intensive, says project director **Janet Faas** (Janet was appointed after the previous director, **Russ Stuart**, returned to his home position with the Municipality of Metro Toronto).

The growth in caseloads, combined with the labour-intensive nature of CIMS and MAIN, means they no longer meet our needs, says Janet. The automated tools in Caseworker will streamline the system, making it easy and fast to update information. It moves us toward a paper-less system and will eventually provide a complete database of all social assistance information on clients, with computer links to all related agencies.

Just a few of the benefits:

- more time for caseworkers to spend working with clients;
- better checks against intra-office fraud, such as double-dipping by dependents;
- more reliable and up-to-date information to reduce errors and overpayments;
- and in the future, more time to spend moving clients off welfare faster, and greater potential to link clients to employment and training opportunities.

The Brantford experience

Stories by Julia Naczynski/Photos by Brian Pickell

Bryan Malott is a perfect example of how a user-friendly computer tool like Caseworker Technology can quickly become indispensable.

Bryan, who became an income maintenance officer at the Brantford Local Office three years ago after 23 years at Oxford Regional Centre (where he'd worked in recreation and in volunteer services), hadn't touch-typed since high school, let alone used a computer keyboard.



Bryan Malott

Now, a work day without Caseworker Technology is unimaginable.

"I think if you tried to take it away from us now, you'd have a fight on your hands," says Bryan — a statement echoed by many Brantford staffers.

IMO **Carrie Blacker** had done keep punching in a previous job, but not inputting on a personal computer. But using Caseworker's "point and click" functions with a mouse, "you get the feeling it's not really work," she says. "And you can see there's so much more capability and even more potential for this technology."

Caseworker is a Windows-based application, so it's easy to use. With it, IMOs can set up a client file and easily update the information. IMOs can just fill in the blanks on the screen with details about the client's family, address, employment, assets, income and accommodation. You can't go wrong and you can't accidentally leave anything out, since Caseworker guides you through the application.

Even the reception and support staff find Caseworker makes their jobs easier. A Caseworker function is used to register clients when they arrive for their appointments, to notify the IMO with whom they meet and check them off the list, all on a computer screen.

All policy manuals are available online; the Family Benefits and General Welfare acts are there too, so the IMO can show the client where and why a policy applies (or doesn't) to their circumstances.

"The customer service is much, much quicker," says IMO supervisor **Jeff Hamilton**. With the old, manual system, information collection and inputting might take two days or even up to two weeks; "Now, we can input and approve the information the same day."

The Brantford Family Benefits staff of 17 IMOs and nine support staff manage a total caseload of 5,800. Brantford was chosen as the pilot site because of its size, proximity to Queen's Park (where the Automating Social Assistance Project team is located) and because the staff have a reputation for being progressive (as much as five years ago they were trying out laptop computers for home visits).

Ken Clevley was one of the first Brantford staff to use Caseworker — he became the resident expert and was seconded to demonstrate the system around the province. (Also on the demonstration team were **Loris Dumanian** of the Ontario Municipal



Carrie Blacker
Social Services Association and
Martyn Bone of Metro Toronto's Scarborough North social services office.)

"We want to get away from processing paper, and this system helps us get our work done better and faster," says Ken. In fact, they've gotten so proficient recently the staff have complained that "the screens aren't turning over fast enough."

Jeff says staff like the system because it's flexible: "There's more than one way to do things, so you can find the best way for you. The creativity it allows is incredible."

Of course, as with any new tool, there were some bugs in the system and it was challenging to adapt to a new way of doing business while maintaining the regular workload. Three weeks of training gave staff the confidence to use Caseworker, and after hands-on use the team offered suggestions on ways to improve the system.

What's next for Caseworker?

Kudos to the ministry's Whitby Office: they went "live" with Caseworker on Dec. 8, becoming the first provincial delivery site to survive the culture shock of full-scale implementation.

By Dec. 18, everyone at Whitby was using Caseworker on the job, accessing a real data base, remembering passwords and checking each morning's download from CIMS.

Waiting in the sidelines for Caseworker are MCSS offices in Peterborough, Lindsay and Port Hope; London, St. Thomas, Woodstock and Simcoe; Hamilton, Welland, St. Catharines, Niagara; and Sudbury.

By the end of 1996, all MCSS offices as well as all municipal CIMS sites should have implemented the first release of Caseworker Technology. Metro Toronto, on MAIN, has implemented seven sites already.

On the horizon is Caseworker Technology Stage II, and a focus on business redesign. Opening discussions between the ministry and a vendor partner, selected through a

common purpose procurement "request for proposals", or RFP, begin this February 1996.

Meanwhile, MCSS offices continue to work with ASAproject staff, their area offices and SHL Systemhouse — the ministry's current partner in Caseworker implementation — to develop business and space plans, training and retrofit schedules to meet 1996 implementation targets for Caseworker I.

— Judy Buxton, ASAproject Communications Co-ordinator



Cindy Henderson demonstrates how Caseworker on Brantford's reception-area computer helps keep track of appointments.



TECHNOLOGY TIPS

FROM INFORMATION SYSTEMS BRANCH

Are you a software pirate?

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police notifies your worksite that it plans to investigate the premises because of reports about alleged software violations. How would you answer these questions?

- Are you unable to provide a software licence or proof of purchase for each copy of software used on your worksite personal computers?
- If your organization has expanded, have you neglected to purchase new software licences for additional workstations?
- Are your employees making extra copies of software for use in other parts of the organization or at home?
- Have you purchased, acquired or "inherited" a computer containing programs preloaded on the hard disk with no documentation, original disks or end-user licence agreement?
- Have you made copies of rented disks or software pre-loaded on a rented computer?
- Have you copied commercial

software down-loaded from a bulletin board?

If your answer to any of these questions is "yes", you are breaking federal law. Line management may be individually susceptible to copyright infringement prosecutions.

Software theft hurts Canadian business and public sector

organizations. The end result is reduced availability of high quality software to end users and delays in efficiently deploying software within the organization.

And, use of pirated programs leaves an

organization more vulnerable to software virus infections and other forms of data contamination.

If you are concerned about software licencing in your section or if you would like to discuss the points made in this article, contact Cate Reardon at Information Systems Branch (tel. 416-730-6658, or e-mail REARDON_C).

Software theft hurts Canadian business and public sector



maximum amount as \$250, then the system will deduct \$250 from the first pay of the month, and deduct the remaining balance of \$150 from the second pay.

Also, multiple direct deposits are now an option for staff. You can direct fixed amounts of your net pay up to five different direct deposit accounts (such as your chequing account, savings account, credit union, or self-funded leave). To use this function, you need to complete a new direct deposit form; you can get this from your pay and benefits representative.

News from Payroll

Recent enhancements to our payroll software system, CORPAY, have resulted in changes to wage garnishments and to multiple direct deposit. These were outlined in an e-mail sent to all DEC nodes on Nov. 30.

Beginning with the Dec. 14 pay, employees who currently have garnishments on their paycheques for Family Support payments will likely see that deduction changed so that the maximum allowable amount is taken from the first pay of each month. For example, if an employee has a court order to pay \$400 per month, and the computer system has calculated the

...New forum for managing redeployment issues

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Program Evaluation (416-925-5359) for AMAPCEO.

The other members for management are **Mike Cillis** (reach him through the administrator's office at Huronia Regional Centre, 705-326-7361); **Louanne Ranstead** (Mississauga Area Office manager, 905-897-3163); **Don Young** (Information Sharing and Fraud Control Unit, 416-326-8208) and redeployment co-ordinator **Mary Kurychak** (416-327-4809). Committee secretary is **Esther Kulman** (416-927-4792).

Also representing AMAPCEO are **Heather Driver** in Child Care Branch (416-327-4871) and **Jo-Ann Walter** (Opportunity Office, 416-327-4812).

The mandate of the committee is to implement and oversee effective training and redeployment measures and to develop labour adjustment and training strategies for professional,

management and excluded employees. The committee also is a forum for dispute resolution if a surplus employee has a complaint that cannot be resolved locally. This covers only those disputes that arise out of the application of the Redeployment of Management and Excluded Employees Directive, the Direct Assignment of Management and Excluded Employees Directive and the Redeployment of Regular Part-time Management and Excluded Employees Directive.

To contact the committee, call or e-mail any member.

Our financial picture and the Internal Administration Initiative

The government plans to reduce the cost of internal government administration by 33 per cent by the end of 1997-98 to save \$300 million annually. This will be done through better management and reduced overlap and duplication of services.

Internal administration — services which support the business of

government — includes functions such as purchasing, accounting and financial services, auditing, human resources, assets management, information technology, payroll, communications and legal services.

Under the Internal Administration Initiative, there will be major changes in the way these services are delivered

and this will result in significant downsizing.

To produce the savings, the government will determine what core internal administrative services it needs and look at a range of options for delivering services, including partnerships with the private sector or between ministries. Through streamlining

and eliminating duplication, the government will make services and processes simpler and more effective.

This two-year project will also reduce duplication across ministries, to standardize and consolidate practices and make better use of technological advances, with a result of cost savings.

People and Places

The Kingston Probation Office has moved from its premises at 833 Northwest Road to a location within the Kingston Area Office. The new address is 1055 Princess St., Suite 108, P.O. Box 970, Kingston K7L 1X8. The phone number is 1-800-267-0236; the fax is 613-545-4550; the probation office secretary can be reached at 613-545-4377.

The MCSS Distribution Centre is joining forces with the Ministry of

Health to reduce costs. The 95 Browns Line location closed on Dec. 5 and re-opened Dec. 18 as MCSS Warehouse and Distribution Program at 99 Adesso Drive, Concord L4K 3C7, where MOH accommodates its General and Support Services, among other units and services. Our staff can be reached at (tel.) 416-327-8084; the fax is 416-327-0329. **Jack Vicente** is the customer service contact person there.

dialogue

 Ontario Community and Social Services

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